

Preparing Your Work Area

Hurricanes can have a powerful impact on coastal and inland communities. To help you understand how (hospital name) responds in the event of a hurricane or severe weather situation, we've created the (handbook name) using information from New Jersey Office of Emergency Management Hurricane Preparedness Plan. This will inform you about what to expect during a hurricane and how our organization responds to ensure that the health needs of our community are met. Areas addressed include employee responsibility, storm communication, safety, sheltering, staffing of special needs shelters, and more. We also recommend that you review our Hurricane Preparedness Plan for a more complete understanding of the topics in the handbook.

Please note: Because each department is responsible for developing its own response in support of our Hurricane Preparedness Plan, be sure to check with your department director or supervisor for your specific responsibilities during a hurricane.

(Hospital name) remains open and adequately staffed during a hurricane. The (hospital) Emergency Operations Center (EOC) is located here and directs the storm preparations of the entire organization. The team in the EOC will be in constant communication with county and state emergency officials for storm updates, and will update the (internal hospital communication line) regularly. Patients ready for discharge will go home so additional beds are available for patients transferred from other facilities, area dialysis patients, and others who require treatment. Additional quantities of medications, food, water, linen, medical/surgical supplies, etc. will be delivered. The facility will be secured, with access granted only to those authorized to be here.

Local, county, and state EOCs also remain open in the event of a hurricane to help meet the emergency needs of the citizens in area.

All departments fill a variety of roles during a hurricane situation, which may include working in different settings or job functions as needs are identified. Some members of (hospital) administrative team will report to the EOC during a storm, while others will provide post-storm relief. The Public Relations department representative will communicate our disaster preparations to local newspapers, radio and television media, update the (internal hospital communication line) and field the numerous calls about the status of our patients and medical center after a storm. Finance employees will work with our financial institutions to make sure funds are available to (the hospital) in the event of storm damage.

Education - June has been designated as "Hurricane Preparedness Month" at (the hospital) - a time to discuss hurricane preparedness and communicate our Hurricane Preparedness Plan with all employees at the start of hurricane season. Informing new employees and reminding a veteran about their role

during a hurricane is very important. That's why all new employees receive information on hurricane preparedness during their department or unit orientation and before the start of hurricane season (June 1) each year.

Exemption Forms – (The hospital) understands some employees may have extenuating circumstances that make it impossible for them to work during a storm. Because of these situations, an employee may be considered exempt and excused from working during a storm. To be eligible, the employee must submit an Exemption Form annually to his or her manager, review "Staffing under Emergency Situations" of the Hurricane Preparedness Plan and meet at least one of the following criteria:

- You provide care for an elderly, immediate relative who cannot care for himself or herself on a routine basis. There are no other adult family members to provide this care. This person would not otherwise qualify for a special needs shelter.
- You provide care that cannot otherwise be delivered for an immediate relative who is handicapped, or otherwise has a chronic illness.
- You are the sole caregiver of a child less than two years of age and cannot make other arrangements.
- When both parents of a child less than two years old, one of whom works for another emergency services employer (i.e. nursing, other medical center, law enforcement, and fire/rescue and city employee) are required to work and have simultaneous roles during a storm, the employee is exempt.
- When both parents of a child less than two years old work at (the hospital) and normally would have simultaneous roles during a storm, one is exempt.

Please note:

- While an approved Exemption Form excuses an employee from working during a storm, **the employee will be required to work in the pre- and or post-storm phases.**
- (The hospital) also understands that sudden life changes occur, so emergency exemptions may be granted by your department director.
- If your situation doesn't fit into any of the categories above, you may be asked to work during a hurricane.

Childcare Enrollment Forms - For employees who volunteer or are required to work during and/or after a storm, (the hospital) provides child care for children who are age 18 or younger. A Childcare Enrollment Form must be completed upon hire and annually in May each year. If you have children older than age 16, they may be allowed to volunteer in other areas of the medical center. If schools and daycare facilities aren't open post-storm, working employees who have no other childcare options may bring their children

to the designated childcare area (check with the internal hospital communication line for details post-storm).

Storm Communications - Communication is the key to emergency preparedness. In the event of an impending storm, (the hospital) Intranet and Hot-Line Number are revised on a regular basis to give employees up-to-date information on facility preparations, conditions and some work schedule expectations. However, these systems are not intended to replace communicating with your supervisor, manager, or director, so be sure to check your home answering machine frequently and/or keep in touch with your department for your responsibilities during/after a storm. Arrangements have been made with local radio and television stations to transmit information for our employees. For the latest updates in the event of a hurricane, turn to any of the following:

LIST TV AND RADIO STATIONS

All radio stations listed have agreed to carry (hospital) announcements.

Storm Staffing - All employees play key roles in meeting the needs of our community when faced with a hurricane. While many of our employees work within the hospital setting, others work in ancillary and support departments and are not covered specifically under a medical center hurricane plan. Their roles in support of the organization plan may require them to work in other areas not specific to their regular jobs by staffing the "Labor Pool." Departments will usually request additional staffing support in May, before the start of hurricane season. The needs of clinical and non-clinical departments to assign work and respite areas are coordinated through the (insert responsible party). One challenge we face during a storm is facility security. Many don't understand that hospitals are not general population shelters. To ensure those inside our facilities truly belong there, employees working before, during or after a storm will

be required to show their (hospital) ID badges before entering and exiting a facility. In addition, the ID badges are also used for employees to return to the hospital when roads are cleared for travel and a curfew is still in force.

(Hospital)'s Emergency Operations Center (EOC) – (The hospital) EOC ensures the adequacy of the medical center's storm preparations and provides the communications link with state and county emergency management officials. Preparations coordinated through the EOC include facility staffing, patient census, bed availability, computer system status, sleeping area designations, childcare, and attaining 100% readiness before the storm hits. The EOC is located in the (insert location). EOC staffing is defined by the Hurricane Preparedness Plan with the facility being operational 12 to 24 hours prior to the expected arrival of the storm.

Sleeping arrangements - Maintaining mental alertness during a stressful situation, especially a hurricane, is very important. Proper rest is paramount to having a sharp team, ready for anything. Because of this, respite hours and areas are assigned to all employees and physicians who are at the facility during the storm. These areas will be identified and assigned by the People Services division. Personnel will receive their specific room assignments when they report for hurricane duty. Remember to bring your own pillows, linens, towels, soap, toilet articles, etc.

Facility safety - A common question during a hurricane or severe storm is, "How safe is the facility?" While the nature of a disaster prevents a guarantee of total safety, as healthcare workers who stay during a storm, we accept a level of risk to serve our patients. (The hospital) performs regular vulnerability assessments to each facility to make them as safe as possible. Experienced structural engineers assess each building's physical strengths and weaknesses.

Volunteers - To make sure we can accommodate a high demand for services should a hurricane directly impact our area, volunteers and auxiliaries are available after a storm. During the storm, they should seek other shelter or evacuate when directed to do so by the local and county Offices of Emergency Management.

Sheltering - Caring for patients in the hospital, as well as those injured after hurricane arrival, requires a well-staffed facility. In the event roads are impassable after a storm, the hospital must have enough staff to operate without interruption for a few days. Each department is responsible for its own staffing plans, so be sure to talk with your department director, manager or supervisor.

Three distinct groups will be in the facility during a hurricane, each with unique circumstances. These include patients, employees, and physicians. A great deal of planning has been directed toward this subject, and each group is addressed below:

Patients and their families: Patients are our primary concern and the reason we're here, so it's important to reassure them and their families during a hurricane. In the event of a storm, family members are always encouraged to seek the safety of an approved shelter.

However, if requested, one family member will be allowed to stay with each patient. The family member will be required to bring the same supplies for his or her own use as are (hospital) employees.

Employees and their families: Our employees are critical to (hospital) success in any emergency, especially a hurricane, and (hospital) understands the stress of preparing a home and family for a storm. We understand how important it is to ensure your family's safety, so the following services will be provided as needed:

- For employees who volunteer or are required to work during or post-storm, (hospital) provides child care for children age 20 or younger. A Childcare Enrollment Form must be completed upon hire and annually in May each year. Children older than 16 may be permitted to volunteer in other areas of the medical center, as appropriate.
- If schools and daycare facilities aren't open post-storm, working employees who have no other childcare options may bring their children to designated childcare facilities.
- Employees working during a storm will be given information before the storm to prepare their homes. If your family members must evacuate, they should bring enough supplies to their shelter location to be comfortable for at least 72 hours.
- A list of approved shelters in (County Name) County is available at (list resource).
- Employees scheduled to work post-storm should only evacuate when required and only go as far as necessary.

Physicians and their families: Volunteer physicians help maintain the readiness of our hospital during a hurricane. Without their assistance, we would not be prepared to care for our patients. In the event of a storm, physicians' families are always encouraged to seek the safety of an approved shelter. However, these physicians are not hospital employees, so if requested, the hospital allows them to bring their families to the facility during the storm. As with patients' family members, they must bring their own sleeping and food supplies.

Special Needs Shelters: Many individuals in our community require special assistance when they're evacuated, but not the acute care that's provided in hospitals. People with special needs may include those requiring 24-hour healthcare maintenance or medical equipment that requires 24-hour electrical power. Residents with special needs should register with the County Office of Emergency Management. When a hurricane is approaching, emergency officials will open the special needs shelters as designated for the particular season.

Preparing Your Work Area - Even with the diverse types of departments within (the hospital), there are a number of work preparedness tasks that should be completed by everyone to prevent damage and loss, especially to protect electronic equipment. Your department plan/checklist may have additional tasks for you to complete. The following are general guidelines for all (hospital) departments. Please be sure to check with your department director, manager, or supervisor to identify other items to be completed within your department before a storm:

Personal Computers (PCs)

- Disconnect your PC, monitor, keyboard and mouse from each other and the wall power outlets. Be sure to also disconnect the network cable on the back of your PC (it looks like a telephone cable). Please note that the Information Services department recommends that you disconnect the network cable from the PC, and not from the wall. This allows you or Information Services to more quickly get the equipment operating after a storm.
- If not already mounted above the floor, move any PC equipment off the floor at least 10 feet from a window, mark it with your name and wrap it in plastic. Do not use red biohazard bags for this process.

Telephones

- Please leave your phone connected.
- Wrap it in plastic and mark it with your name. As with PCs, do not use red biohazard bags in this process.

Fax machines, printers and copiers

- Please be sure all department fax machines, printers, and copier are disconnected from outlets.
- Move them at least 10 feet away from windows and cover them in plastic. Once again, do not use red biohazard bags.

Miscellaneous desktop items

- Remove all papers, books, and loose materials from your desk.
- Place these materials in a box marked with your name and store it off the floor in a safe place.

Finally, please be sure to check with your fellow employees to see if they need any assistance preparing their areas or the department. Teamwork is the cornerstone of hurricane preparation.